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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/613,539	07/03/2003	John M. Curran	1830-06	4522
1515	7590	08/02/2006	EXAMINER	
EVANNS & WALSH 119 N. SAN VICENTE BOULEVARD SUITE 206 BEVERLY HILLS, CA 902112303			HEWITT, JAMES M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3679	

DATE MAILED: 08/02/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/613,539	CURRAN, JOHN M.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	James M. Hewitt	3679	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11/16/05 & 4/24/06.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-29 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ .

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claims 1-25 are objected to because of the following informalities:

In claim 1, it is unclear whether the pipes are being claimed in combination with the system. The preamble recites “A system for facilitating coupling pipes...”, thus claiming the subcombination (the system). Yet in lines 6-7, the recitation “said clamping means over gasket means and said pipe ends” positively claims the pipes, making it unclear as to whether the pipes are being claimed in combination with the system.

In claim 1, line 14, “at least” should be inserted between “said” and “one”.

In claim 13, line 12, a period should be inserted after “screw”.

In claim 14, line 1, “inserion” should be “insertion”.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cohen et al (US 5,090,742) in view of Fisher (US 4,911,594).

As is evident from the figures and col. 1, ll. 57-64, col. 2. ll. 25-33, col. 3, ll. 1-53, Cohen et al discloses the claimed invention as set forth in claims 1-29, except for the retention means. Cohen et al employs washers on the clamping bolts to maintain preload, or to keep the bolts tight. Cohen et al fails to teach that the washers are lock or spring washers, which act to effectively retain the bolts to the clamp halves. Fisher teaches such a washer; one that is used to temporarily retain bolts in an assembled relationship until they are finally joined in the finished product (col. 1, ll. 9-17). In view of Fisher's teaching, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ lock washers in Cohen et al in order to temporarily retain the clamping bolts in an assembled relationship with the clamp halves until they are finally joined. As to claims 8 and 20, Fisher's washer includes a lateral slot (e.g. between fingers 16 and 18 in FIG. 1). As to claims 10, 11, 22 and 23, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to make Fisher's washer square or polygonal since it has been held that changing the shape of a device only involves routine skill in the art. As to claims 12 and 24, as Applicant did not properly challenge the examiner's taking official notice of the use of adhesion means to adhere a washer to a screw or bolt, such is considered as admitted prior art. And it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ adhesion means on the washers of Cohen et al/Fisher in order to better retain and secure the washers to the bolts.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to the claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

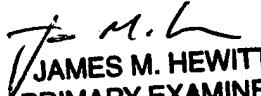
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James M. Hewitt whose telephone number is 571-272-7084.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel Stodola can be reached on 571-272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JMH
7/10/06


JAMES M. HEWITT
PRIMARY EXAMINER